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ABSTRACT

After describing the nature, promise, and reality of school-based management, this document discusses delegation of authority to the school site and distribution of authority among site participants as critical issues in the implementation of school-based management and reviews the importance and benefits of shared decision making. Eight major barriers to changing traditional behavior identified in a 1989 survey of educational practitioners by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) are examined as follows: (1) fear of taking risks; (2) fear of losing power; (3) resistance to changing roles and responsibilities; (4) lack of trust; (5) fear of losing power; (6) inadequate or inappropriate resources; (7) lack of skills; and (8) lack of hierarchical-support. Last, recommendations regarding the transformation of authority in school sites and districts; the development of a systemwide culture supportive of norms of collegiality and collaboration; professional development; and commitment to shared decision making are provided. (17 references) (CLA)

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INSIGHTS ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND PRACTICE

Special Combined Issue

Summer 1990

Harnessing the Energy of People to Improve Schools

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INSIGHTS ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND PRACTICE

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Harnessing the Energy of People to Improve Schools

A number of researchers and national commissions have recommended increasing the autonomy of schools within public education. Many schools and districts are implementing school-based management as a means of enabling school personnel to function more efficiently and flexibly in meeting the school's ultimate goal—student success in learning. The realities of implementation suggest that two critical issues must be resolved in order for the strategy to meet its potential: the delegation of authority to the school site and the distribution of that authority among site participants. For a system to initiate such change in its authority and decision-making arrangements, it must change deeply held beliefs and promote the development of new roles and relationships.

SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT

What is School-Based Management?

The practice of school-based management stems from the belief that the individual school should be the fundamental decision-making unit within the educational system (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988). In districts that have implemented school-based management in order to stimulate and sustain improvements in individual schools, decision-making authority has been redistributed and has resulted in an increase in authority of participants at school sites (Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1989). School-based management entails focusing the full resources of the system at the school level and allowing major decisions to take place at that level (Dade County Public Schools, 1987).

The Promise and Reality of School-Based Management

School-based management has become an increasingly important strategy for guiding school improvement. The rationale for shifting decision-making authority to the school site is based on two assumptions. The first assumption is that members of the school have the expertise and initiative to improve the instructional program and the school climate (Guthrie & Reed, 1986). The argument is that the inclusion of teachers in school leadership, decision making, and problem solving directly engages their expertise and provides them an incentive to use their initiative. The second assumption is that deep, long-lasting school reform requires the active involvement of *all* stakeholders in the educational process (Guthrie, 1986). This argument suggests that school-based management directly increases the involvement of parents and the community in improving the school.

As interest in school-based management grows and the number of efforts increase, the gap between the strategy's potential and its realization is being explored. Although school-based management may stimulate a redistribution of informal power or influence, there is little evidence that significant, long-lasting, or widespread changes are taking place either in the exercise of teachers' professional expertise and initiative or in the participation of parents at school-based management sites.

Why School-Based Management Has Not Fulfilled Its Promise

A closer look at school-based management research points toward a critical implementation factor—the delegation and distribution of for-

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mal decision-making authority. The *delegation of authority* varies widely among sites implementing school-based management. Many school-based management efforts do not delegate full authority to the site, but rather delegate partial authority over one or more areas of decision making.

The degree of discretion sites have within an environment of state statutes, district regulations, and contractual agreements also varies widely. Plans range from allowing no discretion (i.e., compliance with existing rules is expected), to providing a temporary lifting of some district or contractual regulations, to instituting a formal waiver system.

Also, a variety of patterns exist in the *distribution of authority*. In commenting on district changes in authority distribution, Clune and White (1988) noted that the authority and responsibility of principals—not of teachers or parents—appear to be the areas expanded most readily in typical school-based management efforts.

Teachers at most current school-based management sites are involved in decisions on issues peripheral to fundamental instructional content or methodology (Malen et al., 1989) and seldom experience major changes in roles and responsibilities (Clune & White, 1988). Parents and community participants on school-based management teams most commonly function only as advisors or endorsers of decisions already made, due either to control of the team by the principal or to district limitations on decision-making domains delegated to the site (Malen et al., 1989).

The consequences of limiting the delegation and distribution of authority are predictable. As Wood pointed out, "outcomes such as increased decision quality, satisfaction, commitment, and productivity do not *necessarily* result from allowing organizational participants to become members of decision-making groups" (1984, p. 62). Participation is valued, feelings of satisfaction are enhanced, creativity is encouraged, and participants' acceptance and commitment to the decision is strengthened *only* when groups or individuals believe that there is potential for real influence in their participation, not merely token or passive involvement (Guthrie & Reed, 1986).

Teacher and parent *input* into decision making and the *authority* to make the decisions are simply not the same. Limited delegation and/or distribution of authority in districts that implement school-based management ultimately inhibits the ability of the strategy to sustain initial increases in teacher and parent/community contributions. While input into decisions at the school site has been found to *initially* enhance participants' morale and motivation and stimulate efforts toward school improvement, Malen et al. (1989) reported a *clear decline in satisfaction and involvement* by teachers and parents after the "initial, energizing effects" have worn off. When this happens, frustration and a reversion to traditional practices are common (Malen et al., 1989).

As Wood (1984) suggested: "When work group members state that participatory decision making does not work because their input seems to be ignored, they may in fact *be appraising a non-event*. It may be that participatory decision making does not work in these instances because it was never actually attempted" (p. 60). Districts that intend to *actually attempt* school-based management must first ask two questions regarding authority: "what authority is delegated to the school site?" and "how is authority distributed among site participants?" The answers to these questions will determine whether the site implements the strategy in a way that fulfills the promises of school-based management.

What Authority is Delegated to the School Site?

In answering the first authority question—"what authority is delegated to the school

site?"—a district seeking full implementation of school-based management will decentralize authority to the greatest possible extent and provide broad discretion to the site. The individual school becomes the fundamental decision-making unit within the educational system and, subsequently, authority is redefined throughout the system. The state and district set broad goals and standards and provide resources, but the deployment of those resources and the path toward achievement of the goals and standards are determined by school-site participants.

Having full authority over personnel and resources enables the site to "integrate goal-setting, policy-making, planning, budgeting, implementing, and evaluating in a manner that contrasts with the often unsystematic, fragmented processes which have caused so much frustration and ineffectiveness in the past" (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988, pp. 3-4). Other benefits ascribed to school-based management are a strengthening of the quality of planning, a more efficient use of resources, and increased flexibility in responding to the needs of students and community. Broad authority permits a quicker reallocation of both human and material resources in response to changing needs at the site.

How is Authority Distributed Among Site Participants?

A district's delegation of full authority to the school site cannot, in and of itself, release teachers' expertise or increase parent and community participation. In answering the second authority question—"how is authority distributed among site participants?"—a district must focus on its reason for implementing school-based management. If the intent is to maximize the potential of the school community to change learning outcomes for its students, the authority delegated to the school site cannot reside with the principal alone. The greatest possible distribution of authority at the school site is required. Site authority must be shared. The implementation of school-based management—increasing the use of teachers' professional expertise and increasing parent and community participation—is clearly affected by issues of authority. When the implementation of school-based management limits teacher authority to decisions in areas over which they already have influence or in areas peripheral to teaching and learning, the results are a minimal increase in use of expertise and a decline in morale and motivation. When the implementation of school-based management denies authority to parents and community members by giving them advisory or endorser status, or limiting site authority over decision-making domains, the results are maintenance of traditional roles and declining participation.

Shared Decision Making: The Critical School-Based Management Component

The ability of school-based management to bring about enduring school improvement hinges on how effectively it is linked with shared decision making. Most commonly, this term is referred to as "participatory decision making" in the literature. Such decision making is a collaborative approach in which the "superordinate" and "subordinates" work together as equals to "share and analyze problems together, generate and evaluate alternatives, and attempt to reach agreement (consensus) on decisions. Joint decision making occurs as influence over the final choice is shared equally, with no distinction between superordinate and subordinates" (Wood, 1984, p. 61).

Many benefits of shared decision making are reported or implied in the literature. An extensive review by Wood (1984) revealed that shared decision making results in high decision quality; improves employee satisfaction, morale, commitment, and productivity; reduces resistance to change; and reduces absenteeism. An equally positive impact was found on student learning by Darling-Hammond (1988), who asserted that research has confirmed the value of faculty decision making

and that "participatory management by teachers and principals, based on collaborative planning, collegial problem solving, and constant intellectual sharing, produces both student learning gains and increased teacher satisfaction and retention" (p. 41). The research on effective schools indicates that administrators of effective schools do not exercise instructional leadership alone. Such leadership is often the collective task of the principal along with other members of the organization (Duttweiler & Hord, 1987).

Finally, there is a belief among many researchers and practitioners that shared decision making is simply the "right way in which to do the right things." The United States must develop a participatory culture to maximize the use of technology and information in order to survive as a world-class culture into the 21st century. "If that is to occur, schools will have to transform themselves into participatory organizational cultures" (Parish, Eubanks, Aquila, & Walker, 1989, p. 393). Sashkin termed this an *ethical imperative* (cited in Lewis, 1989, p. i).

Shared decision making provides models for the roles and relationships essential in a participatory culture. It promises to close the gap between the promise and reality of school-based management by harnessing the energy currently expended by students (to underachieve, tune out, rebel, or drop out), teachers (to circumvent the system), parents and community members (to flee the system), and principals (to try to keep the lid on).

SEDL SURVEY: BARRIERS TO CHANGING TRADITIONAL BEHAVIOR

Barriers to Changing Practice

It has been suggested above that the ability of school-based management to bring about enduring school improvement hinges on how effectively it is linked with shared decision making. When considering the wide difference between behaviors practiced in hierarchical organizations and those required in participatory organizations, it becomes evident that implementing shared decision making requires changes in traditional attitudes and behaviors on the part of people throughout the school community. Districts choosing to implement school-based management will encounter a variety of impediments to change.

The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) conducted a survey of educational practitioners in 1989 to identify the difficulties that confront schools and districts when initiating shared decision making. Survey respondents reported a number of difficulties they encountered or observed in trying to change traditional behavior. Eight major barriers to changing traditional behavior, derived from an analysis of these data, are as follows:

1. **Fear of taking risks**
2. **Fear of losing power**
3. **Resistance to changing roles and responsibilities**
4. **Lack of trust**
5. **Lack of definition and clarity**
6. **Inadequate or inappropriate resources**
7. **Lack of skills**
8. **Lack of hierarchical support**

Fear of Taking Risks

Nineteen percent of the SEDL survey respondents reported a fear of risk-taking among site participants. Their observations tended to be brief and generalized descriptions of uneasiness, such as "fear of change," "apprehension," "fear of the unknown," and "resistance to change." One respondent stated, "Some people are resistant to change...are not risk-takers"—implying that fear of risk-taking would be a response to change from some people in any organization. Another respondent linked fear of risk-taking with the concerns people have regarding interpersonal relations. The fear of alienating someone may restrain some indi-

viduals from expressing their opinions. A third respondent discussed risk-taking in the context of overall program development at the site, pointing out that: "Although all the parties (School Board, superintendent, teachers' union) openly and repeatedly encouraged [schools involved in] school-based-management/shared-decision-making to dream and take risks (without retribution for failures), more creative waiver requests and budget utilizations were not pursued until the second and third year of the pilot."

Fear of Losing Power

People in decision-making positions in the school and district can experience a fear of losing power as they move from a traditional hierarchical decision-making model to a shared decision-making model. Thirty-eight percent of the SEDL survey respondents stated that people at their site—particularly principals, central office staff, and school board members—had to confront and overcome the fear of losing power. School boards are fearful that school site councils will become the final decision makers in school matters. Building administrators are fearful of losing control or "giving away the store." Similarly, in discussing central office staff, one survey respondent stated that "understanding that sharing decision making does not really disenfranchise Central [office staff] is a very difficult concept for some to grasp."

The fear of losing power was also reported among staff and parents who may have built bases of informal influence in the school or district. One respondent observed that these teachers and parents may fear the consequences of trading the security of an established relationship with a single administrator for uncertain influence as "one among many" on a school council.

Power is not only an authority or control issue. It also encompasses some individuals' sense of self and status. One survey respondent stated that a major barrier to changing traditional authority relationships was convincing principals and central office staff that their positions would not be done away with entirely, nor would they be relegated to mere "managers of facilities." Another respondent asserted that the challenge at his/her site was to convince participants that "shared decision making can occur without any parties relinquishing their values and responsibilities or *losing face.*"

Resistance to Changing Roles and Responsibilities

A third barrier to changing behavior is participant resistance to changing traditional roles and responsibilities. The redistribution of authority at the school site demands that administrators, teachers, parents, and community members forge different roles and accept new responsibilities. Fifty-one percent of respondents to the SEDL survey reported resistance among people in the school community to accepting change in this area. Four sources of resistance were discussed:

- reluctance to assume new responsibilities
- apathy
- satisfaction with the status quo
- dependence on norms and role expectations

A majority of respondents who discussed resistance to changing traditional roles and responsibilities observed an unwillingness among teachers to assume responsibilities different from those they traditionally have held. Respondents offered a variety of interpretations for this reluctance: teachers lack confidence in their ability to participate, they are unwilling or unable to devote the time necessary to participate, they prefer that administrators make the *difficult* decisions, or they fear increased personal accountability.

In examining this resistance over time, some respondents observed significant changes. For

example, one stated that "over the three-year period of this project we noticed that, at first, teachers were reluctant to share their ideas, but as they became more comfortable with their roles they became true leaders." Another noted that, "In the beginning, the newly empowered decision makers were, in many cases, frightened by the responsibility and the danger of being held responsible for mistakes. Most of these fears have been overcome [in the process of implementation]."

Several survey respondents discussed two passive sources of resistance: (1) apathy toward shared decision making and (2) satisfaction with the status quo. Each of these behaviors adds weight to any active resistance within a school community to changing traditional roles and responsibilities.

Finally, barriers to changing roles and responsibilities also are found in the deeper, often unspoken role expectations of teachers, administrators, and parents. Strong norms exist regarding what it means to *be* and behave in each of the established roles. People have a broad range of attitudes regarding change in traditional roles and these attitudes can provide the foundation for overt resistance to formal changes in responsibilities. More than one-third of the respondents who reported resistance to changing roles and responsibilities discussed these normative barriers. SEDL survey findings in this area are in line with the contention by Malen et al. (1989) that "the failure to alter orientations and norms inhibits participants from taking on new roles or fully participating in site decision making."

Lack of Trust

Thirty percent of SEDL survey respondents discussed a fourth barrier, lack of trust, that is encountered as participants grapple with the consequences of changing power and assuming new roles and responsibilities. The building of new roles and relationships required for shared decision making can uncover the existence of mistrust in every relational permutation possible. Survey respondents most frequently described a perceived mistrust of district-level personnel on the part of teachers and building administrators.

Given an atmosphere of mistrust and apprehension, it is not surprising that a few survey respondents who discussed this barrier identified the need for site participants to air grievances. One respondent stated that "trivial matters stored up over the years from lack of input" impeded progress at their site. Another observed that "some decisions previously made at district or administrative levels require major complaining sessions before movement can be made."

Lack of Definition and Clarity

People must be provided with clear definitions of a concept or strategy and its operational implications in order to engage in successful implementation. Thirty-eight percent of the survey respondents stated that certain aspects of shared decision making lacked definition or clarity in their district. Three areas in particular were most frequently discussed:

- the shared decision-making concept
- vision and beliefs
- roles

Many respondents reported a lack of clear definition of the concept itself—indicating that there needs to be a *common language* and a set of understandings about shared decision making and its implications in the day-to-day *"normal* way of conducting school business."

Others stated that their district lacked a clearly defined, shared vision of an educational system—a vision that encompasses both desired learning outcomes for students and a redefinition of teaching and administration for faculties and principals.

Finally, a number of respondents reported that people experienced difficulty defining the new roles, responsibilities and relationships re-

quired in shared decision making. One suggested that this may remain a challenge over time; successful shared decision making requires a "constant clarification of each role and the individual responsibilities that accompany decentralization."

Inadequate or Inappropriate Resources

Thirty-eight percent of the SEDL survey respondents stated that lack of resources or inappropriate resource allocation represents a serious barrier to successful implementation of shared decision making. This sixth barrier to changing traditional behavior was discussed by respondents in three distinct categories:

- time
- staff
- money

It is significant to note that fully two-thirds of the responses in this category focused on the need for time, while only a few respondents specified staff and even fewer specified money.

In discussing the need for time, one survey respondent stated, "A major challenge is finding quality time for local staff to address the change process. Traditional organizational models simply do not provide time." Respondents described a variety of distinct needs for time that are difficult to meet in the typical school day, e.g., time to scan and collect ideas regarding "new ways of doing things," time for training in new skills, time for decision-making bodies to meet, and time to "play out the group dynamic" that is necessary to ensure that sound consensus decision making takes place.

The time barrier is crucial because most of the people who need to be involved in the work of shared decision making at the site are already engaged in full-time work. The typical teacher's work day provides minimal teaching preparation time and even less time for meetings with colleagues. In addition, most parents and community members are committed to full work days and work weeks. Under current patterns of time allocation in schools, participation in shared decision making often is a cost rather than a benefit to teachers (Firestone & Corbett, 1988), other staff, and parents.

Time in the longer term was also discussed. One respondent noted that "the process takes significantly more time to institutionalize than the literature implies." Another discussed the difficulty inherent in pursuing any type of far-reaching change in the educational system, where "training for change [must be accomplished] while maintaining the operation of schools and the school system." Two other time factors that affect implementation in the longer term are: (1) time is needed to explore and understand the process itself prior to implementation, and (2) time must be provided for shared decision making to be "learned and practiced until it becomes a natural behavior."

The second resource—staff—was discussed in terms of the human resource issues that arise from implementing shared decision making. One respondent stated that successful shared decision making requires the "selection of creative/innovative school staff members with positive attitudes and high expectations for disadvantaged children." This suggests that successful implementation of the strategy depends on including or developing personnel who can contribute these strengths to the process. Another respondent stated that "the person who must initiate change [i.e., principal or superintendent] may not be a change agent." The process and results of shared decision making also can require changes in how personnel are deployed (particularly support staff such as paraprofessionals and secretaries), suggesting that typical school staffing patterns or static schedules may present difficulties at the site.

Most of the respondents who discussed the third resource—money—described a need to increase or reallocate funds for staff development activities. Only one respondent stated there was a need to finance higher pay for

teachers; all others focused on financing the "tremendous amount of training that school participants need, aimed at attitudinal change and learning new skills."

Lack of Skills

The seventh barrier to changing traditional behavior toward shared decision making encompasses the need to develop current human resources at the school and district levels. Thirty percent of SEDL survey respondents reported a critical lack of knowledge and skills needed for successful shared decision making at their sites. Respondents asserted that site participants require skills to move from "individual thinking to collective thinking" and that faculties need to be able to move from "isolated working and decision making patterns to [those of] group decision making." Survey responses clustered into the following three areas of need:

- knowledge
- decision-making skills
- collaborative skills

According to survey respondents, the knowledge needed by shared decision-making participants includes information about the strategy itself—both the philosophy and "research evidence of the efficacy of this management mode." Organizational theory and change theory also are needed to provide participants with a context for implementation and an understanding of its implications. All stakeholders, including the community at large, need to be given a clear rationale for the implementation of shared decision making. Those making decisions at the school site need a clear charge and operational ground rules, and they need to be provided with all information relevant to specific site decision-making tasks.

Survey respondents stated that decision-making skills are needed by site participants in the following areas: developing a vision or mission statement, leadership, problem solving and critical thinking, strategic planning, priority setting, resource utilization, and the design of accountability and evaluation plans. Collaborative skills needed by participants include conflict resolution, communication, commitment building, and team building skills. The unique difficulty in achieving shared decision making was highlighted when nearly one-fourth of the respondents in this category focused on the lack of experience in consensus decision making among their site participants. Decision making by consensus demands skills very different from those required in decision making by vote.

In discussing site participants' lack of knowledge and skills, SEDL survey respondents offered a variety of ideas regarding how participants can best gain new knowledge and skills at the site. Ideas ranged from the use of professional consultants or experienced facilitators to effectively guide participants on-site; to taking a train-the-trainer approach, with selected staff undergoing training and then returning to the site to train their faculties and communities; to taking an "immersion" approach in which all staff participate in gathering information, gaining decision-making skills, and developing collaborative behaviors.

Lack of Hierarchical Support

The final barrier to changing traditional behavior is lack of hierarchical support. Twenty-seven percent of SEDL survey respondents discussed four different aspects of this barrier:

- absence of full-system commitment to shared decision making
- conflicts with outside regulations
- transience of personnel
- inadequate communication

A majority of respondents who discussed this barrier stated that their site lacked hierarchical support in the form of broad and permanent commitment to the process of shared decision

making. SEDL survey respondents asserted the need for full support from all "high level" district stakeholders, including central office staff, the superintendent, and the school board. Full-system commitment was defined by one respondent as including institution-wide preparation for the change prior to implementation and a commitment to shared decision-making concepts and underlying assumptions.

The need also for hierarchical commitment *beyond* the district was stated as follows by one respondent: "Perhaps my biggest frustration has been the lack of support from state educational officials. The move towards shared governance also means an increase in flexibility from state rules and regulations." Indeed, a number of respondents cited the need to resolve conflicts with outside regulations. One respondent described difficulty in "achieving a balance between district requirements and school-level initiatives" while another described state mandates as impeding "constructive progress because they are too confining, inflexible, and limiting."

Respondents named transience of district personnel as a major problem. Each incoming superintendent or board member has the potential to bring with him or her a new perception of shared decision making. The result is often devastating. One respondent stated, "as new managers have risen to positions of leadership many of the main features of the original decentralized system have eroded and decision making is more centralized now than it was at the start." Equally damaging consequences are found at the school site when the school-based management team is affected by principal and teaching staff transfers and parent/family mobility.

Finally, many of the respondents reported problems with communication—a difficulty that may mark an insufficiently committed district. The uni-directional communication pattern typically present in traditional schools and districts does not facilitate shared planning and decision making. Even a two-way pattern between central office and school site, and between principal and teachers, is insufficient. The need for a multi-directional communication network was described by one survey respondent who advocated the creation of "new communications mechanisms within schools and from schools to [the] community and back."

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on reports in the literature and on the reported experiences of sites responding to SEDL's survey. It is evident that the implementation of school-based management/shared decision making requires fundamental changes in traditional behavior and the development of new roles and relationships. School and district staff, parents, and the community must be empowered to maximize the educational experience for students, and whole-system commitment must be built and maintained to support change that directly responds to the needs of all children. The recommendations are directed toward accomplishing this.

Recommendation One: School Sites and Districts Should Effect a Transformation of Authority.

Authority is the freedom to act within the framework provided by policy and law and the opportunity to make decisions within an area of professional expertise; it is the currency with which people influence what goes on in an organization. A transformation of authority requires systemic revision in roles, relationships, distribution of authority, and allocation of resources — i.e., in the organizational structure. Such a transformation involves not only a redistribution of the power to make decisions, but also a change in the process by which decisions are made.

The emergence of broader school-based authority may be understood best as a change in

the definition of leadership and as new expectations for all participants in the school community. Formally empowering the school site necessitates change not only at the building level, but also at the various levels higher in the educational hierarchy. The process by which decisions are made shifts from one that is hierarchical to one that is participative.

The following are implications for the transformation of authority at the school and district levels:

Teacher. Education is currently a highly stratified field in which those at the "lowest" level — teachers — are underutilized. Teachers, who are among the mere 19% of U.S. total population with college degrees, are "alone among those with such extensive professional preparation [in their] lack [of] full control over their professional development" (Casanova, 1989, p. 48). Teachers' understanding of the content and methodology of their profession is considerable, yet opportunities to exercise professional judgment are limited both inside and outside the classroom.

New roles for teachers may emerge through the development of teaching teams in which teachers participate in planning, performing, controlling, and improving the instructional program. There may be a differentiation of the teaching career in which interns receive limited assignments and support from experienced teachers, while master teachers have assignments that offer opportunities ranging from the full-time teaching of students to a combination of teaching and curriculum development, teacher training and supervision, or school-based research.

Principal. Principals and teachers should develop a collaborative and collegial professional partnership. Such a partnership requires a very different role from the one previously expected of most principals. A respondent to SEDL's inquiry described the principal's "new" role as a change from an autocratic position to a democratic position. The "new" role may take on more supportive and enabling responsibilities in a collaborative context, such as listening actively and creating opportunities for staff to express ideas, providing resources and a supportive environment for collaborative planning, establishing school-wide goals and programs through staff input and participation, and staffing committees with representatives from all sides (Russell, Mazzarella, White, & Maurer, 1985).

Superintendent. Changes in roles and relationships need to occur at all levels. In particular, shared decision making should be modeled and practiced by the superintendent. The problems that result when this is not the custom are highlighted by another SEDL respondent who said, "the district mandated that principals implement shared decision making in buildings, yet [the superintendent and central office staff] do not model it downtown, nor has the district hierarchy and general organization been changed to have shared decision making throughout the district." The experience of those involved in implementing these strategies suggests there is a much greater likelihood for the success of change when the entire system — including the superintendent as the traditional district leader — "practices what is preached."

Central Office. Sites that have been engaged in school-based management/shared decision making for some time tend to describe the central office as a flexible service department that responds to needs emerging from the individual schools. A "supply and demand" cycle may emerge in which central staffing and resource allocation are based on school site "demand" for specific curriculum materials, training, and technical assistance. In many areas, the function of central office staff may change from decision making to support and facilitation of school efforts (Harrison, Killion, & Mitchell, 1989).

School Board. The school board role should become that of "partner" to the superintendent and

to representatives of teacher and administrator organizations. Clune and White (1988) reported extensive involvement of teachers' organizations in the development of districts' school-based management/shared decision-making efforts. Several of the most publicized sites (Dade County, Florida; Cincinnati, Ohio; Rochester, New York; Hammond, Indiana) are characterized by strong superintendent/labor leader partnerships. If school-based management/shared decision making is to create opportunities for improving student learning, partnerships must be in evidence at all levels. A partnership between highest-level policy, management, and labor leaders can model the process required for a community to permanently change its schools for the better.

Parents and Community Members. Parents and community members should become partners both at the district level and with principal, teachers, and staff at the building level. For example, parent participation on school and district councils can harness a valuable, frequently neglected, resource for the schools — parents' personal knowledge of and influence over their children. In becoming members of school or district councils, parent and community participants take on new leadership roles to directly improve the educational program at their schools or to influence school policy at the district level (Malen et al., 1989). Finally, parents and community members may have to become advocates for change and serve a public relations function in the greater community.

Recommendation Two: A System-Wide Culture Should Be Developed That Supports Norms of Collegiality and Collaboration.

Effective implementation of school-based management/shared decision making means finding new ways to create an open, collaborative mode of work that replaces existing conditions of isolation and powerlessness. The development of collegial norms is important. Such norms represent a form of group problem solving in which ideas are shared and alternative solutions to problems are explored. Schools and districts that have incorporated teacher-leader roles into their organizational structure have encouraged collegiality by developing and nurturing a climate characterized by open communication, sharing, and willingness to learn. Efforts must be made to develop mutual respect and trust; otherwise suspicion, competitiveness, and inflexibility will defeat any attempt to establish collegial relationships (Ruck, 1986).

Recommendation Three: Professional Development Should Be Provided So That Staff at All Levels Can Acquire New Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes.

Professional development should focus on the new behaviors that members of the school community will have to learn in order to carry out their new roles. Professional development should engage participants in experiences that yield direct transfer to the skills required in school-based management/shared decision making. Participants at all levels (e.g., administrators, teachers, parents, etc.) need to receive appropriate training in order to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to accept, as well as participate in, changing traditional roles, relationships, and behavior as described in the preceding sections. Professional development should address personal and interpersonal needs and include experiences in group processes, team building, and conflict resolution. In addition, staff and other participants must be prepared to deal with the substantive and technical aspects of the issues about which decisions must be made.

Recommendation Four: The Entire Educational System Should Demonstrate Commitment to Shared Decision Making.

For school-based management to be successful, long-term, system-wide commitment to the shared decision-making concept should be built and maintained. System-wide commitment includes support for the effort from every

level — from school-house to state-house — reflected by a clear definition of mission, goals, and outcomes and a clear understanding of roles, responsibilities, and distribution of authority. Commitment also includes assuring continuity and stability, protecting the effort from external constraints, and providing the necessary resources and training for successful implementation.

CONCLUSION

Those districts that are implementing school-based management and shared decision making are doing so in an attempt to replace centralized reform efforts with strategies that will better serve students and the total learning community. Schools and districts that attempt to restructure their authority and decision-making arrangements should expect to encounter personal, interpersonal, and institutional barriers to change erected by beliefs and traditions deeply held by school and community members. Analysis of the results of SEDL's 1989 survey of educational practitioners identified eight major barriers: *fear of taking risks, fear of losing power, resistance to changing roles and responsibilities, lack of trust, lack of definition and clarity, inadequate or inappropriate resources, lack of skills,* and *lack of hierarchical support.*

The SEDL survey found that school-based-management and shared decision-making strategies directly challenge and seek to change the complex and well-entrenched patterns of institutional and individual behavior that Timar & Kirp (1987) contend have remained untouched by top-down reforms. Survey findings also illustrate the interconnectedness of the individual school with every other part of the educational system. Local schools are embedded in the larger educational system, and barriers to change exist throughout the system—not only within the school but also within the district, the community, and the state. Change at the school level must be accompanied by changes at all levels of the system in order for school-based management and shared decision making to realize their effectivel potential.

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